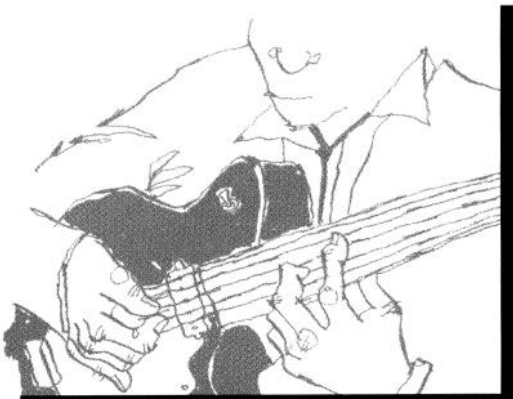
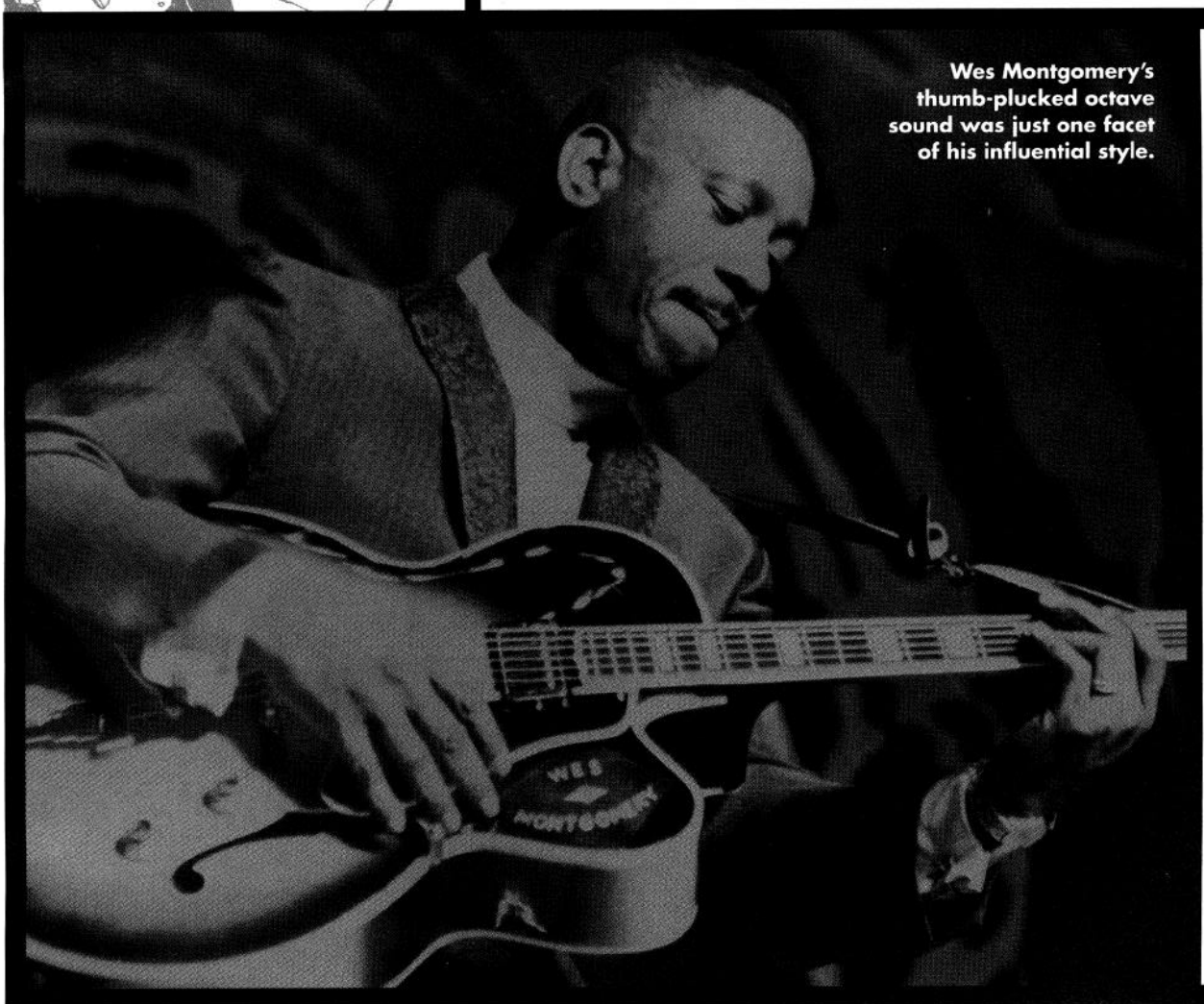


Beyond the Triad



Wes Montgomery's thumb-plucked octave sound was just one facet of his influential style.

7TH CHORD ARPEGGIOS

An arpeggio is just a chord rolled over on its side. If you want to link your solo lines directly to a tune's chords, arpeggios are the logical answer. The place to start is four-note chords, since anything less doesn't reflect the colors of jazz's extended harmonies.

The first type of arpeggio we'll

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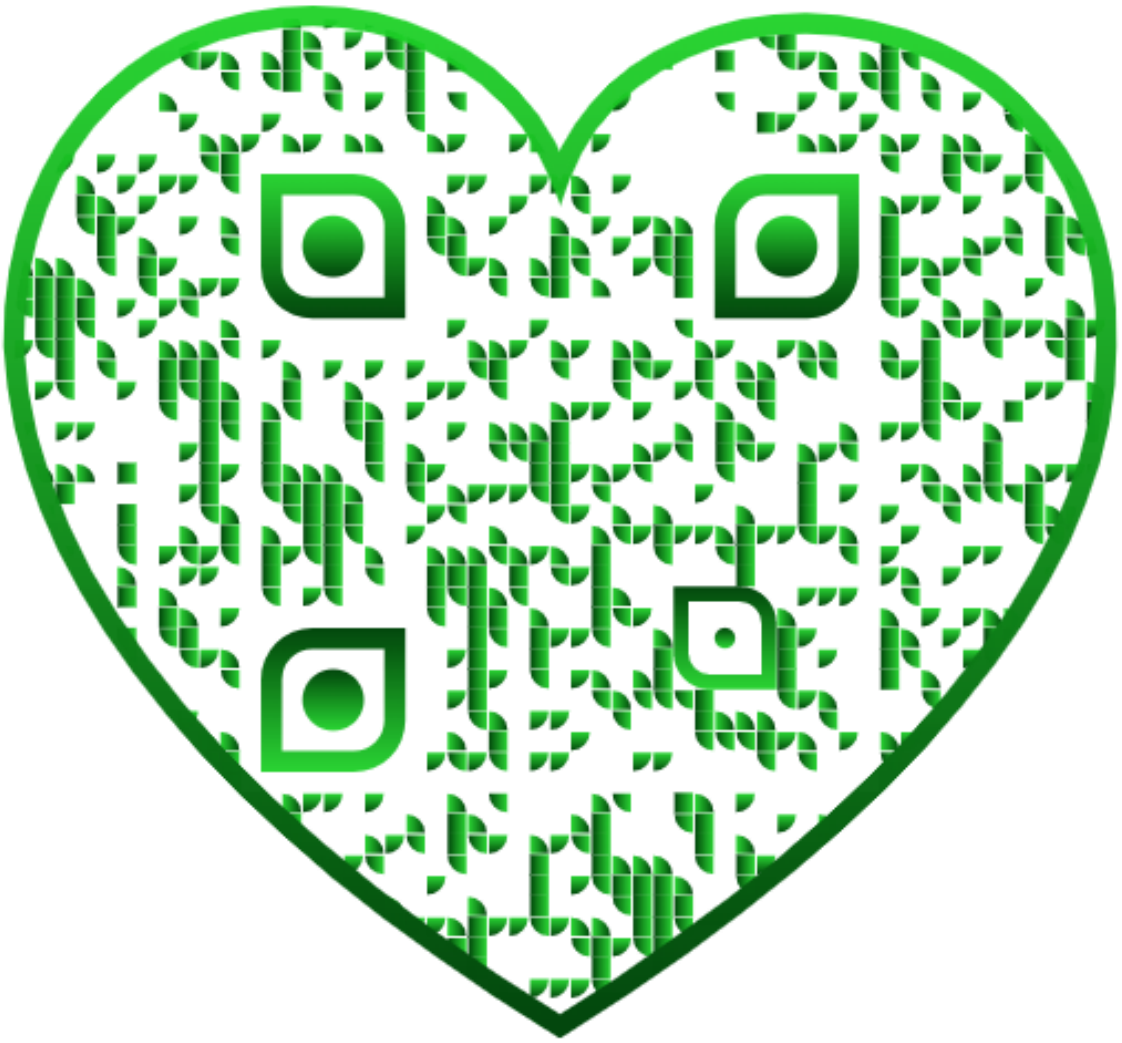


consider is the major 7. Let's take *Cmaj7*. **Ex. 1** shows its four notes: *C, E, G, B.*

Now, how do we get this arpeggio onto the fretboard? We'd like to run it through two octaves—the distance between the lowest and highest string in any stationary position. **Ex. 2** shows one of several possible patterns, plus the notes we're covering.

Note that the major-7th form shown here is composed of a simple major triad plus one extra note. In a major-7th arpeggio, that note will always be found one fret lower than the root.

To etch this fretboard formula deeply in your hands and ears, you have to give it a thorough workout. First, play only the lower octave of the arpeggio over and over until you feel you could recognize it anywhere by ear or eye. Then play only the bottom note (*C* on the sixth string, 8th fret) and sing the rest of the arpeggio. Double-check by playing. Next, continue the arpeggio through the upper octave. Memorize the entire fretboard pattern by playing up and down through the two-octave range shown in the Ex. 2 diagram.

Now, a further test of your coordination: Turn on your metronome and move the arpeggio form up and down the fingerboard. Once you're confident you can play the pattern smoothly at any location, try singing the notes as you play them. Are you able to name the chord's root at whatever position you begin the pattern? Remember, the sixth-string starting point is a handy signpost for the arpeggio's name.

The next step is to take a systematic tour of the cycle of fourths. Counterclockwise movement around the circle of fifths produces a sequence of fourths [see page 34]. First, get used to locating the following roots on the sixth string (the corresponding frets are shown in parentheses: *C* (8), *F* (1 or 13), *B♭* (6), *E♭* (11), *A♭* (4), *D♭* (9), *G♭* (2), *B* (7), *E* (12), *A* (5), *D* (10), *G* (3). When you can locate these points quickly, play the full two-octave arpeggio through all the keys in time with the metronome.

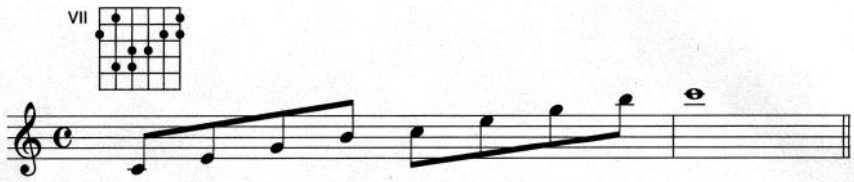
Finally, play along with the arpeggio by constantly changing the note order. This is a great technique builder for both hands. **Ex. 3** shows the basic pattern and one variation.

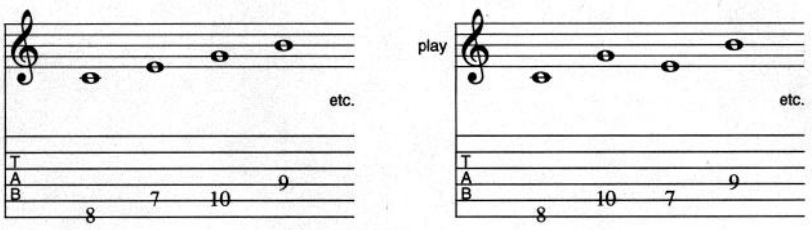
Another type of four-note arpeggio is the minor 7th. **Ex. 4** shows an *Am7* (*A, C, E, G*) and its arpeggio. The two-octave fingering for this arpeggio is easy, because it has the same shape as a minor-7th barre chord (**Ex. 5**).

Take this arpeggio pattern through all the steps above, and then experiment—try alternating between major 7th and minor 7th in various keys up and down the fretboard. Work with the metronome.

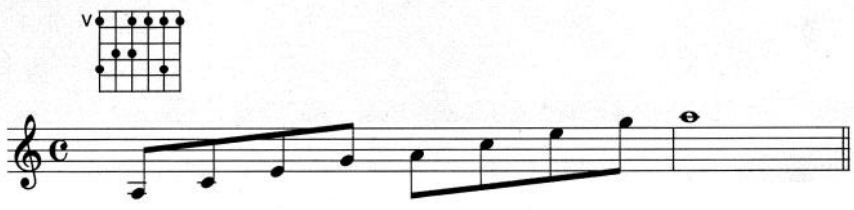
Dominant 7 and minor 7♭5 arpeggios make interesting practice material, since they include

Ex. 1

Ex. 2

Ex. 3



Ex. 4

Ex. 5

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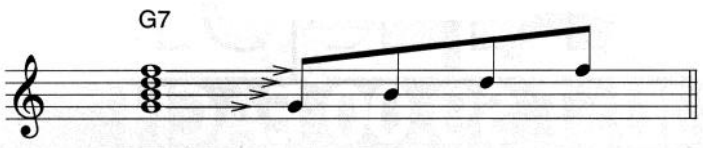
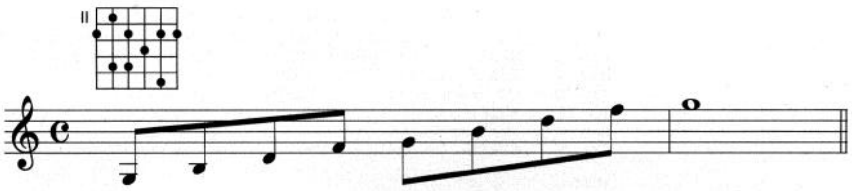
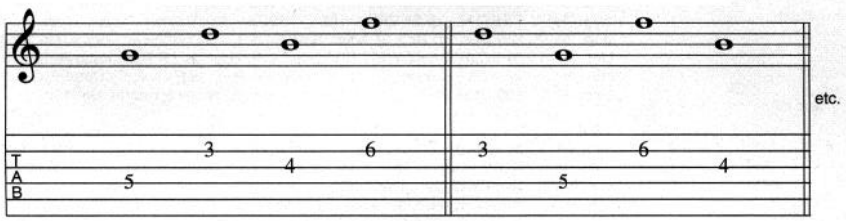
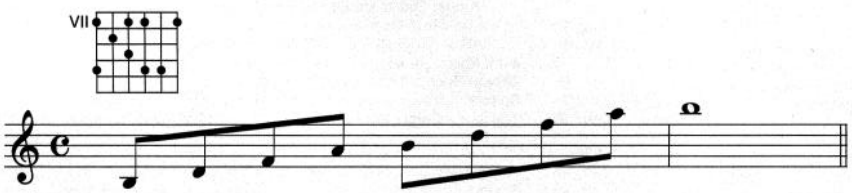

Ex. 7

Ex. 8



Ex. 9

Ex. 10

dissonant intervals that call for resolution. Start with a G7 (*G, B, D, F*), shown in **Ex. 6**.

As you did with the major 7 and minor 7 arpeggios, extend the *G7* through two octaves. **Ex. 7**'s fretboard map points the way.

Now, repeat the drill we tried before. Begin by playing only the bottom octave. When you know those notes inside-out, test yourself. Play only the bottom note (*G* on the sixth string), and sing the rest of the arpeggio. Use your guitar to check your accuracy. Next, pick through both octaves as written, repeating the learning steps again. This will ingrain the entire fingering pattern in your eyes and ears.

Now that you know the full arpeggio in one position, play it in random keys up and down the fretboard in time with a metronome. When this becomes easy at a moderate tempo, sing the arpeggio as you play it.

The next step is the cycle of fourths. Locate the notes on the sixth string, then play the arpeggio through all 12 keys. To add musical interest and build technique, change the order of the notes in the arpeggio. **Ex. 8** shows a couple of ways.

The last arpeggio we'll study is the minor 7♭5, or half-diminished. **Ex. 9** shows a *Bm7♭5* (*B, D, F, D*), the half-diminished chord that appears inthe key of *C* major. **Ex. 10** projects the arpeggio through two octaves.

This arpeggio's unusual structure makes it a bit more elusive to your fingers and ears. But if you take the minor 7♭5 through the same steps I've outlined for the other chords, it will eventually become a familiar part of your repertoire. ■

Once you're confidant you can play the pattern smoothly, try singing the notes as you play them.